

**EXHIBIT A**

March 25, 2007

The Honorable Robert Holmes Bell  
Chief U.S. District Judge  
Western District of Michigan  
110 Michigan St, NW  
Grand Rapid, MI 49503

Dear Judge Bell,

I am writing to you in regards to my son, Christopher Brattain. I'm very proud of my son for taking responsibility for the crime he committed and for his willingness to serve whatever sentence imposed upon him as punishment for his actions. In my communications with him, both over the telephone and through letters, he has expressed over and over again his incredible sorrow and regret for what he did. He has told me his number one concern right now is providing financial support to his daughters. He truly wants them to be successful in whatever they choose in life.

Since I divorced Christopher's Mother when he was almost three years old and he came to live with me only during his high school years, it is during those years that I knew Christopher best. It is from those years that I will tell you about my son.

Christopher is a very caring, generous, and compassionate man. While in the band during his junior year in high school, Christopher overheard the band director talk about some special software that would be of great benefit to the band, but that the school could not afford to buy. That same afternoon while on my way home from work, I drove passed Christopher who was walking in the opposite direction. I turned around, picked him up and ask where he was going. Christopher told me of the conversation he had overheard and he was going to the credit union to withdraw the \$800 out of his savings account to give to the band director. That \$800 represented almost all the money Christopher had in the bank, yet he did not hesitate for one moment to donate it to the band. I recommended to Christopher that he talk directly with the band director before he donated the money. Of course, the band director thanked Christopher and told him he could not accept his offer.

In another instance, Christopher told me over and over again that he planned to buy a pickup truck when he had saved enough money. When I asked why it was so important to him to have a pickup truck, he told me that his friends would soon be going to college and he wanted the truck so he could help them move. No one had actually asked for his help, he just wanted to be ready when they did.

Christopher has done many other things that demonstrate his wonderful, giving nature. While in the military, he volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and started a music ministry at a church in Las Vegas. From the time his legal problems began and until the time he was arrested, Christopher helped one of his brothers obtain his GED and another

get started in college. He took a job delivering newspapers and persuaded his family, including his Mom, to take on several additional paper routes to generate additional income for the family. He was employed at McDonalds as a maintenance worker and, occasionally, as a food handler since he had previous work experience in a similar capacity during his high school years. Christopher also enrolled in college to pursue training that would allow him to increase his income so he could provide more for his daughters and so he could be a contributing member of society.

When Christopher completes his prison sentence, he wants to return to his passion of music and electronics and I will do everything in my power to help him do that. I don't know what that will look like right now, but Christopher and I will figure it out and do whatever it takes.

Judge Bell, I love my son very much and my heart hurts for him and his daughters. I believe with the right psychological help, Christopher can be completely rehabilitated and returned to society with no fear of this happening again. I hope my letter is helpful to you as you consider the sentence my son must serve. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Joseph S. Brattain